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HISTORICAL ADDRESS
AND OTHER EXERCISES
ON THE
ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,
OF PLAINFIELD (MERIDEN), NEW HAMPSHIRE,

SEPTEMBER 6, 1892.

LEBANON, N. H.
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1892.

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of
❖ Voice of the Church. ❖

WHEREAS: In the preparation of this Centennial Address, our beloved Pastor has exceeded our highest expectations, therefore

RESOLVED: That we express our appreciation of his faithful, efficient, efforts in the ministry of the Word and all other departments of the pastorate.

STEPHEN D. STONE, {
CONVERSE COLE, { Deacons.

WILLIAM C. TRUE, {
CONVERSE COLE, { Church Committee.
ASA WALKER, {

The Exercises.

Tuesday, September 6, 1892, was an interesting occasion to the Baptist Church in Meriden, being the 100th anniversary of its organization. The church was tastily decorated with flowers, and above the pulpit at the right and left respectively appeared the inscriptions "1792," "1892," in evergreens. The program, under the direction of the pastor, was as follows:

1. ANTHEM. "I Was Glad When They Said Unto Me."
CHOIR.
2. INVOCATION.—Lord's Prayer, REV. G. C. TROW.
3. ADDRESS OF WELCOME. MR. WM. C. TRUE.
4. RESPONSE. REV. O. C. SARGENT.
5. ANTHEM. "The Earth is the Lord's." CHOIR.
6. SCRIPTURE READING. REV. J. F. FIELDING.
7. PRAYER. REV. N. F. TILDEN.
8. ANTHEM. "Sing and Rejoice, O Zion." CHOIR.
9. HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

REV. O. WILSON KIMBALL.

ADDRESS.

The primary object of history is to accurately narrate the acts and experiences of man. Therefore the historic subject is man. This paper will deal with the events of a century in which Christian men and women were concerned. It is a partial biographical sketch of a branch of the Church of the Holy Christ. It hints at the successive activities and fortunes of a God-fearing few. There is never space for history, or time for its perusal, which does not include God and His dealings with the children of men—especially those in the federal compact of heart through Jesus Christ.

This church had its birth of organization at the house of one James Kimball, on the 6th day of September, 1792. In what section, the meagre records make no mention. It is not improbable that the event took place in what is presently known as the True neighborhood.

(Subsequent inquiries have led to the unquestioned conclusion that the said James Kimball owned and occupied the premises now known as the Parker Cole place—

the childhood home of the present senior deacon, Converse Cole. Standing amid the ruins, recently, a peculiar reverential awe crept over us, and we withdrew with additional convictions that it was none other than the identical spot where the compact was formed.)

The council, convened on that occasion, consisted of Elders Jedediah Hebbard and John Drue, with lay brethren from the Baptist Church of Hartford, Vt. After earnest prayer for divine guidance, Elder Drue was chosen moderator and Elder Hebbard scribe. The compendium of faith and practice held by those wishing to become a church was found to be in accord with that of the churches to which the several brethren belonged. They were, therefore, duly formed and subsequently received into the fellowship of sister churches.

Dropping the thread of religious thought, we note a few of the events and achievements of the secular world. Two years prior to 1792, the District of Columbia was fixed as the future seat of the United States government. Eight years later the capital was fully established at Washington. New Hampshire joined the Union three years previous to the establishment of this Christian body. In 1790 the population of Plainfield did not exceed 1000.

The federal constitution, that wonderful document, the only alternative against civil war, was five years old. Gen. George Washington, its promoter and the first president of the Union, was serving the fourth year of his first term. About this time the first coach to carry the British mails left London for Bristol. In France, St. Montgolfier raised the first balloon. A little later and Robert Fulton constructs the first steamboat, and operates it upon the waters of the Hudson. A few years pass and the first train of steam cars rolls out of Baltimore for Elliot's Mills. Then came the first telegraph in America by Prof. Morse.

Glancing back to the old country, among the numerous inventions is that of the Frenchman Daguerre, by which photographic likenesses of the human face were produced. The spread of the English language—its development among the nations of the globe in the last hundred years—is simply wonderful. You will allow me to call it the gateway for the conquest of Christ's kingdom. The recent Canterbury revision of the Holy Bible was a necessity of the time consequent upon the rapidly-increasing interest among students of the English scriptures. Among the marvels of human achievement in the hundred years are those with the forces of electricity.

The lights, the street cars, the telephone, and the thousand and one other appliances of this mighty, yet invisible agent.

What would our fathers have thought to have seen the phonograph and listened to its touching utterance of the words and music of loving ones long since silent in death? Doubtful indeed if Elder Jonathan Cram, the first preacher to this Church, could have maintained his mental equilibrium had he suddenly come upon one riding the bicycle. In July of this year a relay bicycle run from Charlestown, Mass., to Portsmouth, N. H., with important navy yard documents, was made in four hours and ten minutes.

It is a noteworthy fact that the center of population in the United States has moved westward at the rate of nearly fifty miles each decade of the century.

Dropping the thread of secular thought, we now resume that of the religious. For a series of years the church held its public meetings in private dwellings, subsequently in the schoolhouses, later alternating between the two situated at East Plainfield and the True district. I do not deem it wise to recite, in this connection, the details of experience during those years of struggle. To mention the eccentric acts of those days would be but to make you mirthful. Suffice it to say that the standard of discipline was at a high altitude, and exceedingly exacting. There was much of the grace of love, but law looked head and shoulders higher, at times, to say the least. The main object of the church meeting seemed to be to consider the conduct of certain members, to vote, to visit, report, excommunicate, etc. Sometimes the ground of the grievance was unsoundness in the cardinal doctrines of the special faith. There were a few along with them in those days who could hardly digest all included in the doctrine of the trinity, election, foreordination, perseverance of the saints, etc.

The people of prominence were the Blanchards, the Crams, the Hebbards, and the Kimballs. The name of True appears early in the records, and, unlike some others, proves reliable. It was at a meeting held at the house of one Daniel True, May 4th, 1795, that the church voted to ordain Jonathan Cram to the ministry of the gospel. Elder Cram was the first to exercise the pastoral care, and to minister regularly to this church. That he was a worthy man, none will question, but his goodness is not proven by his practice of preaching sermons four hours in length. The low, narrow seats in the school-houses must have severely tested the faith

of the attendants who sat, without rising, during the protracted service. The house he occupied was situated on the hill overlooking the valley south, near the present residence of brother Wm. C. True, on land now owned by Mr. John Hammond French. The old cellar, partially filled with the accumulating *debris* and growth of bushes, is the only relic.

Frequent invitations came from the Congregational society to unite interests, and worship God with them. The kindness of the Congregationalists was heartily appreciated, but for reasons better known to the Baptists, consolidation seemed not advisable. In 1799, by special request of the church in Lebanon, this church sent its Elder and several delegates to examine and aid in the ordination of one Laban Hall to the ministry of Christ. The service was appointed to take place at the residence of one Pelatiah Bush. Requests for councils concerning grievances between the two churches in Grafton were quite frequent. Revivals, or special seasons of religious renewing, were not numerous among the churches at this time.

In the year 1800 Uriah Smith, a member of this church, a candidate for ordination as an evangelist, was examined by council convened at the house of Benjamin True, and pronounced "Not ripe enough in doctrinal knowledge." Doctrinal soundness seemed essential in the estimate of our ancestors. To talk glibly, even if nothing is taught substantially, seems an immense ability in the opinions of not a few of today. Reject undeserving applicants, and an increase of ministerial efficiency would follow.

The records indicate that in the year 1803 the Baptists worshipped with the Congregationalists; that at a certain conference meeting deacons Kimball and True were chosen a committee to confer with the Congregational society with reference to securing Elder Kendrick, of Cornish for a given Sunday. Subsequently the said Elder Kendrick preached frequently for this church, in school-houses and other places. On June 5th, 1812, the names of Reuben and Hannah True were added to the list of church membership. The records are not replete with interesting items between the last named date and 1820. Evidently there were not a few dark days during those years.

On Sept. 20th, of the year 1820, several of the brethren and sisters, namely, J. Cram, Willis Kimball, Moses True, Levi Cram, Richard Evans, Anna Cram, Betsey

Cram, and Charlotte Kimball met for the purpose of re-consecration and prayer for the descent of the Spirit.

In 1821 the church voted to take steps toward the formation of a Baptist Society, and to circulate a subscription paper for the purpose of securing funds for the support of preaching according to Baptist belief. Reuben True, Richard Evans, and George Avery were appointed agents to solicit said funds. About this time one Elder Coburn made a visit to these brethren of like precious faith and was invited to preach. He remained with the church, doing most of the preaching, for a term of nearly five years, during which time several important additions were made. It is presumed that Elder Coburn was earnest and of average ability.

During the years from '26 to '30 Elder Kendrick of Cornish was the principal preacher. Elder Kendrick was a man of magnificent physique—well proportioned, and of commanding presence. He was not classically cultivated, but possessed mental abilities of no mean order. Religiously he was sound in the faith and brave to a fault, of eccentric habits, yet conscientious. The records give nothing definite concerning church progress during these years of intermittent pastoral service.

In February, 1832, the committee requested Clement Hough to communicate with his brother, Rev. Joseph Hough, of Bozrah, Conn., with reference to his settlement as pastor of the church. Mr. Hough came, and after five week's trial was unanimously elected to the pastorate. About this time one Elder John Peacock appears among the passing pictures. Having no special connection with the church, I can spare but this brief mention. In the year 1829 an important meeting was held at East Plainfield, near the residence of Dr. Martin, on which occasion steps were taken toward the erection of a church edifice. The constitution adopted specified the dimensions as fifty by forty feet, one story high, with steeple and belfry. The plans were successfully executed, and the completed house dedicated to the worship of God in May, 1832, the Rev. Oren Tracy preaching the dedicatory sermon, from the scripture found in Gen. 28: 17.—"This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Of the impressiveness of the service there are but brief hints. It is taken for granted, however, that intense enthusiasm centered in the occasion. No doubt the burden of building had pressed heavily on the few, and common comforts had been sacrificed that the house of holy worship might be provided. Why the first church building

was located in the east part of the town we do not know, but presume in the interests of the south Lebanon brethren.

The house being dedicated, a series of revival services began under the supervision of pastor Hough, assisted by brethren from the adjacent churches. The church was revived and souls were saved. Among the important additions was that of Samuel Winkley of precious memory, a man of sterling qualities who subsequently became deacon. Deacon Winkley seemed a born leader. With consecrated abilities he was enabled to aid in all the varied interests of the body of which he was proud to be a part. About this time meetings were frequently held at the Plain to accomodate those resident in that part of the town. The pastorate of Elder Hough closed early in the year of 1834. He was evidently a good leader and of average preaching abilities. For nearly a year the church was pastorless, then the Rev. J. E. Strong of Gilford was called. The work under pastor Strong seemed to open auspiciously. In January or February of this year a protracted meeting resulted in the conversion of thirty or more whose ages ranged from 13 to 32 years. These accessions greatly encouraged the brethren; the church took a new lease of life. In the year 1835 they reported a membership of 57, with contributions to benevolent objects amounting to \$115.22. Such magnificent offerings, considering the number, are proof positive of the genuineness of the work of grace just closed. Pastor Strong remained about a year and closed his labors. Again the church was destitute of a visible head. They continued thus for about three years, when Elder Gibbon Williams was chosen to the pastorate.

About this time the question of change of location began to be discussed. The result was the calling of a special meeting which convened at the residence of T. J. Harris at East Plainfield, March 26th, 1836, on which occasion it was decided to dispose of or remove the house to a more central or advantageous site. Sale was made with parties of East Plainfield and a new location made at Meriden. The present grounds were purchased of Dr. Elias Frost. The condescension of Dr. Frost to part with this portion of his beautiful grounds was the result of his close, friendly relations with Maj. Reuben True. The doctor's pew remains the property of his descendants and is still occupied by his daughter Mary and friends.

The house, built of brick, with dimension of 40 by 55 feet, with symmetrical steeple, was speedily completed;

and on Jan. 1st, 1839, it was dedicated to the worship of the one true and living God. A few names come into prominence as important factors in the erection of the present edifice. Reuben True appears the principal agent in the enterprise, then his brother Osgood, Clement Hough, Captain Moses Eaton, and others. Capt. Eaton was the father of our venerable brother Orvill T. Eaton and sister Mary Daniels. The latter a valued accession to the Church of Lebanon. Capt. E. will be remembered for his unselfish activities in all departments of church life, especially for his untiring efforts in the erection of the present edifice. These brethren seemed to feel the necessity of Christ's cause and acted accordingly. They gave liberally of their time and means. Those less able to aid were doubtless appreciative of the generosity of these brethren.

Rev. Gibbon Williams, the pastor, preached the sermon of dedication, Rev. Ira Pearsons and Rev. Reuben Sayer assisted in the devotional exercises. John D. Ford of Cornish was musical director. For a time prior to the completion of this house, the church services were held in a small hall in the parsonage. Again the True brothers are the benefactors. They purchase and present to the church the parsonage property consisting of comfortable house, out buildings and 16 acres of land. Elder Williams was an earnest, able man with intensely progressive ideas. About the middle of March of that year he commenced a series of revival services, assisted by preaching brethren from different parts of the state. During that season of grace forty-seven souls were converted and added to the church. Other accessions followed until 1841, when the membership was one hundred and nineteen. In this connection, we meet for the first time in the history the name of Rev. Samuel W. Miles, of Newport, South Wales. He becomes a member of the church at this time. A year later and the name of Elder Williams disappears from the records, and the Rev. Mr. Miles is called to the pastorate. In March of the same year Rev. Daniel F. Richardson unites with the church.

During the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. Miles, which extended over a period of nearly 20 years, no church records were kept. The events of those years, however important to the writer of this paper, are chronicled only on the tablet of human memory. The church speaks in fragmentary utterances from the lips of her living participants of those days. Rev. Mr. Miles was not a native American. In what part of the principality of old Wales

he first saw light, none of his Meriden parishioners were ever privileged to know. The impulse to immigrate, the occasion of his coming to this country, were not whispered into the ears of his most intimate friends. He was a man of *values*; he knew, and knew enough not to let others know *all*. He was not absolutely ascetic in habit, yet of retiring disposition, he often sought seclusion. He was unmarried until near the close of life when he wedded the widow of Converse Smith of Plainfield. That he was singular and sometimes severely denounced as erratic goes without saying.

As a scholar and theologian he had but few peers. His intellectual attainments were of an high order. He had the abilities of the critic and knew how to use them. His sermons were models in every sense, and if doctrinal, they were sound and certain in their effect. His spiritual impressions and experiences seemed to himself too secret and sacred to be sent into common language. They must be voiced only from the pulpit which was his throne of power. He was not one to rely upon applause; to appreciate him you must stretch to your highest height. With this stalwart thinker and preacher as leader, with his characteristic want of social and spiritual nerve, it does not surprise us that so few church accessions were made during those years. His pastorate, however, was by no means a barren period. Several were received to membership and the church was instructed in the fundamentals of faith and doctrine. Under his oddities were forces of character which left an impress time cannot efface. Among his last acts was that of committing all his written thoughts to the flames. He also requested that no obituary notice should be published, that his tombstone should bear no inscription beyond his name and date of death. He fell on sleep in the parsonage home where he had long lived and for which he cherished sacred affection. He died in the faith he so ably advocated.

In 1861 those members living in the vicinity of the "Plain" applied for letters of dismissal that they might form a church at that place. This request was granted and the new church was recognized at the next associational gathering which took place at East Washington. Thus the fond mother was called to part with 30 or more of her dutiful children. She rejoiced, however, that her sons and daughters were to settle so near the home of their childhood. Their edifice is modeled much after this, and was built by united efforts of Methodists, Universalists, and Baptists. Rev. Daniel F. Richardson was the

next pastor of this church; he was a resident of Hanover but his church membership had been with this body for many years. Although receiving no formal call to the pastorate he continued his ministrations for nearly 5 years. Rev. Richardson was a strong man, scholarly, and religiously wise and sound. Under his faithful leadership several important additions were made. He was a man of cultured qualities whose memory is precious to all whose privilege it was to know him. He passed to his heavenly reward from his home in Hanover.

He was succeeded by the Rev. S. L. Elliot of Claremont. Rev. Elliot served the church for a brief period not exceeding one year. Subsequently the church called the Rev. Charles H. Green. Mr. Green was a man of broad sympathies, of saintly bearing, a good minister of Jesus Christ. The church at that time was somewhat reduced; its membership did not exceed 32, but in union there is strength. No inharmonious elements were present in the body. Bro. Green led them to grand achievements in the kingdom; there was no special outpouring of the spirit, but there was a steady ingathering of souls.

The pastorate of this choice man lasted but about one year, when he succumbed to consumptive tendencies and was no more, for God had taken him. He, too, died in the hush of the pastoral home. In the ebb of the energies, as the spirit took its upward flight, these words fell from his trembling lips: "He whom I have recommended as the sinner's hope is now mine." The church was stricken with grief well-nigh insupportable. The cloud passed, the church arose from its knees, brushed away its tears, and resolutely renewed the conflict for the kingdom. In the autumn of '62 the membership was again reduced. Several of the best, namely, the Houghs, were dismissed to aid in the formation of a church in Lebanon. Members of this excellent family remain unto this day, however, to perpetuate the honored name in the body of the fathers, to sacrifice common interests, to co-operate in every department of church work. The intermingling of Trues and Houghs has developed ideal Christian character. The tender twig transplanted to that field has grown to sizeable and healthful proportions under the care and culture of its God-fearing husbandmen. The mother church felt keenly her loss both financially and religiously; but, confiding in her God, she renewed her endeavors to meet the increasing demand.

To succeed the Rev. Mr. Green, the church recalled

the Rev. S. L. Elliott, whose pastorate continued about two years, during which time several additions were made. His next settlement was in Vermont, where he died a few months later, aged forty-eight years. Mr. E. was a man of strong convictions. He was graduated at the New Hampton Theological Seminary—the *alma mater* of the Rev. D. C. Eddy, D. D., the Rev. Amos Webster, D. D., and many others of note in the Baptist ministry.

After an interim of a few months, during which the church relied upon supplies, the Rev. Stephen G. Abbott was unanimously elected to the pastorate. Important improvements were made during Mr. Abbott's term of service, which covered a period of five years. The pipe organ now in use was purchased and put in its place at a cost of near \$1000; also the commodious vestry, which is an indispensable adjunct for work and worship. Pastor Abbott was a genial Christian gentleman, popular with all classes. His literary attainments were above the average. His sermons were finished productions; his theology of the apostolic type. In the latter part of the fourth year of his pastorate a goodly number were added to the church. Those years of refreshing from the presence of the Lord will not soon be forgotten. Brother Abbott has since retired from postoral care, but not from the holy calling of the preacher. He resides at Keene; and while engaged in literary pursuits, supplies pulpits as Providence opens the way.

The next to succeed in the office of pastor was the Rev. Horace G. Hubbard, now pastor of the Baptist church at Campton Village. Mr. Hubbard remained five years, resigning in April, '76. Pastor Hubbard proved himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. Not so swift as some, but he got there in good condition. Early in his pastorate the Lord let the droppings of his grace fall on pastor and people. The general awakening resulted in the calling of evangelist Whittier to the pastor's assistance. The glorious work continued uninterrupted for weeks. Many souls came into the kingdom through the saving grace of the Christ. Thus another restful oasis in the interesting history of the dear old church.

The next in the line of leaders was the Rev. Albert Heald. Brother Heald served the church with excellent acceptance for about five years. Nothing special is noted. A steady progress is evident. Mr. Heald may not have had the scholastic advantages of some of his predecessors, but he must rank with the class of judicious, painstaking pastors. Always open to the converse of his

constituents, having an interest in the welfare of all, he could but be popular. During those years baptisms were frequent; but dismissions were common. Members were changing residences, and requesting letters to unite with sister churches. Brother Heald removed to Pelchville, Vt., where he is still a beloved pastor.

To succeed in the office, the church called the Rev. B. F. Lawrence, who entered upon the work in July of the same year. Brother Lawrence was a man of good ministerial methods, well educated, and of dignified deportment. He won popular esteem, not by his flattery, but by his well-guarded Christian manhood. Besides the work of the immediate parish, he preached, baptised, and did pastoral service in sections adjoining, especially in the Woodard district. There several were saved and brought into the fellowship of the church. The interior of the edifice was remodeled, and other improvements made, during this important pastorate. It was with great reluctance that the church parted with this devoted leader. He was called to Maine, where he still resides. At the close of his pastorate the church numbered 60 members.

The church was again in a shepherdless condition. After casting about, the executive committee decided upon the Rev. Wm. P. Bartlett of Campton Village. He was called, and in January commenced his labors as pastor. His service covered a period of two years and four months, during which several conversions took place, and some worthy additions were made. Mr. Bartlett has more than the average pulpit ability. His sermonic methods are biblical; he sometimes enforces gospel truth in a masterly manner. He is well educated, and able to occupy influential positions. His sincerity of intention can be questioned by none. He removed to Vermont, thence to Oxford, Mass., where is still active in the pastorate.

For several months the church was supplied with preaching by the Rev. Geo. C. Trow, of Plainfield Plain, and others, until August, '85, when the Rev. O. Wilson Kimball of Cottage City, Mass., was unanimously invited to enter the line of sacred succession. During the three years of the present pastorate the old church has enjoyed many heavenly seasons. The word of the Infinite, under the inspiration of his Spirit, has passed out and into hearts, piercing even to the dividing assunder, discerning to the wounded one the healing of the holy Christ. Some heads of households, who had not seen the interior of God's sanctuary for years, have been recovered, restored,

and made meet for the Master's use. They delight in the sanctifying service of the sanctuary, and endeavor to walk blameless in the presence of the Priest and King of us all. Heaven hears our grateful acknowledgements. God knows we try to appreciate the wonderful dealings of his grace. Among those received by baptism are two worthy students preparing for the work of the ministry. Chester G. Savage, the first licentiate, is pursuing theological studies at Newton Seminary. Thomas Phillips Evans, a devoted student at Kimball Union Academy, a very promising young preacher, came into the fold by baptism, also M. D. and Jay Brown, brothers, from the state of New York, all careful, conscientious young men. In all, twenty-five have been received by the ordinance of baptism. The work has been progressive—characterized by no undue excitement.

The parsonage buildings have undergone important repairs. The additions of a commodious piazza and the new coat of paint over all have greatly beautified the historic home. The house of worship has also received a new garment; having had the soiled suit put out of sight, she stands forth clothed in the clean white. An aid society among the ladies has been organized under the direction of the pastor's wife. Through the timely efforts of this society other improvements may be expected. The wisest and best concede that the church was never more prosperous. The congregations are large and attentive; the Sunday-school united, interesting, and full of hope.

The church has a well-invested fund amounting to \$1300. The largest individual donor was Miss Mary True. The original agents of the fund were the brothers Reuben and Osgood True. Other names appear, such as Samuel Winkley, Burbank, Eaton, Chellis, Daniels, Sidney True, Jesse Spaulding, Mrs. Daniels, Lucy Andrews. Among the number of members who have entered the ministry we mention Benj. O. True, who graduated from Dartmouth College and Rochester Theological Seminary, was for several years pastor of large and influential churches, and is now Professor of Church History in the later-named institution of sacred learning. In connection with Dr. True we appropriately mention the name of Samuel Winkley Cole, son of Dea. and Mrs. Cole, who was converted early in life, and at once assumed the duties of organist. He is now a resident of Boston, a teacher of music, also the efficient organist of the Clarendon Street Baptist Church. His annual visits are refreshing to pastor and people.

The church has always cared kindly for its pastors, paying the salary as agreed, and often much better. It has, at all times, endeavored to be at peace with all. It has, however, held unswervingly to the spirit of apostolic teaching. There have been fourteen pastors and seven deacons. Stephen D. Stone and Converse Cole still act in the latter office. For the extended term of 27 years Dea. Stone wrote accurately and eloquently the records of the dealings of God with this church. It has been the privilege of the writer of this paper to peruse those records; and how often the tear has stolen down the cheek, and the pen trembled, as we traced the tender thoughts that flowed through his pen! He has written his own blessed epitaph. Dea. Cole's voice, yea, his very soul, has become a part of the body. These men have taken the mantle of the Trues, the Eatons, the Winkleys, and others who preceded in the holy office and work. Many others, descendants of the stalwart fathers and mothers, should be mentioned, but space is not permitted.

A few items of general information and we close this paper. Who can question the authority of Neander's prophecy? The Baptists have a mighty mission. They are to bring Christendom back to the primitive New Testament order. If they be true to themselves, true to their Master, they will be his honored instruments in securing the result. Bishop Smith of Kentucky speaks thus: "God in his providence has permitted the rise of the Baptists for the purpose of ultimately restoring the apostolic mode of baptism." Said the late Dr. Wood of Andover, Mass.: "I have wished that our denomination [the Congregational] was as free from erratic speculations, and as well grounded in the doctrines and experimental principles of the Puritans as the Baptists. It seems to me that they are the Christians who are likely to maintain pure Christianity and to hold fast the form of sound words."

If the Lord has ordained us to such transcendent achievements, to be the leading factors in the world's redemption—if the eye of the nation looks thus upon us—what sort of people ought we to be in all holy conversation, in conscience, in deportment, in spiritual power? Should we not cling more closely to biblical simplicity and heart purity? Should we not defend the peculiar truths providentially entrusted to our care? Should we not so instruct our children that they may be ready at all times to give an intelligent reason for cherishing the faith of their fathers? Should we not be models of morality and piety? Why not our Christlikeness, our meekness,

our love for each other, put to eternal silence the charge of hyper sectarianism?

At the beginning of this century there were less than 500 Baptist churches in this country. The entire membership did not exceed 40 000. At the close of the century we have 35,890 churches with 3,269,806 members—nearly one in every nineteen of the country's population. One hundred years ago there was but one real foreign missionary society; now there are nearly 300. The Baptist convention for missionary purposes, organized in 1814, is now the Missionary Union, having 1000 preachers, 700 churches, with 85,000 members in heathen lands. The first modern missionaries to heathen lands were Baptists—Carey and others. Joseph Hughes, the first to conceive the idea of giving the bible to all nations, was a Baptist. The first translations of the scripture into heathen tongues were made by Baptists. The first Christian churches in India, Burmah, and China were Baptist churches.

But we will not glory save in the cross of the crucified Christ. My beloved brethren, look at our history. What hath God wrought! The growth of the Home Missionary department of the Baptist denomination is phenomenal. Organized in the year 1832, objectively to disseminate the gospel of the kingdom among Americans, now has its well-equipped agents in every state and territory, also in Canada and Mexico. It sends its self-denying, able advocates to the frontiers, among the lawless, to preach and teach the truths that enlighten, uplift, and save, to leaven the irreligious lump, and permanently plant the ensign of the cross. These brave men and women, fresh from college halls, stand in the rush of European immigration to turn the tide toward God, loyalty, and order. Its consecrated agents are active among Indians, Africans, Chinese, and Mexicans. Its schools, colleges, and theological seminaries thickly dot the South and West. Last year the society sustained 1 053 missionaries, erected 121 churches, in 33 states and territories, organized 115 churches, with 9,388 additions, baptising 4,335 converts; also 27 schools and other departments of gospel work, time will not permit me to mention.

Every local church is a part of this body, and annually contributes its share to defray the expense of the God-commissioned work. If this church falls behind in its gifts, it is not because of its want of benevolent disposition, but because of its want of training in that particular direction.

Beloved brethren, we have reason for profound grati-

tude to God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ our Saviour, the Holy Spirit, the comfort and guide of the saved, for the bright, blessed record of the past of this people; for the glorious fruits of devotion and heart consecration, in the humble as well as in the honored and exalted life; for the high ideals and prosperous conditions of the churches born of this stalwart, vigorous stock; for the succession of strong and earnest ministers of the word pastors pure in heart and life. We fall on our knees, and breathe our prayer of thanksgiving for our God-fearing, faithful ancestry; for the fathers and mothers who stood shoulder to shoulder beneath the burden in the heat of the day; who withheld not; who swerved not in the often arduous maintainance of the institutions of this church. We would, but, O, how feeble our attempts to tell or tabulate the providencies of a century!

May we send into the opening century contributions of the best we possess—God's gift of intelligence, Christian culture, and a purpose to build broader and better for those who shall succeed us. Let me touch you tenderly with the thought of one surviving saint whose eyes saw the first minister—sister Hannah D. True, widow of the late Reuben True, and mother of Benjamin O. and William C. True, past 90 years of age, resides with the latter son. She wrought with her husband in the days of church construction. Would you see the monument of her devotion, look about you. We hold her tenderly but closely. May the setting sun send its shafts of glory and thus gild her pale brow while she passes to the beautiful beyond. "In the cross of Christ we glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time." *In hoc signo vinces.*

10. SOLO. "One hundred years ago."

MISS HATTIE DAVIS.

11. POEM.

MRS. SARAH CHENEY ABBOTT.

(Read by Hon. E. H. CHENEY, editor of the Granite State Free Press, and U. S. Consul to Matanzas, Cuba.)

POEM.

God in his wisdom early planned
And planted here with careful hand
A modest vine—the records say
A hundred years ago today.
His people, then a scattered few,
Together came with purpose true.
All, prompted by his word and grace,
With one accord were in one place.

Regeneration, works and faith
All pointed to baptismal death;
An emblem of their Lord's own grave,
Which he had filled that he might save
All who believe — and from it rose,
Victor o'er death and all his foes;
That, like him, they, 'mid toil and strife,
Might walk the new and better life.
They took the scriptures for their rule
Of faith and practice, "old, old school."
An "Elder," duly authorized,
Gave his right hand and organized
The Baptist Church of Meriden;
And all the people said "amen,"
And on their way rejoicing went,
Till God to them a shepherd sent
To 'tend and fold this little flock
Beneath the shadow of the Rock,
In pastures where sweet verdure grows,
By waters clear, in soft repose.
This new-formed union, Christ the head,
With his own hand and Spirit led;
The word was quick; and o'er the plain
Fell showers of grace like summer rain.
Time's tide, rolled back one hundred years,
Lays on the strand joys, griefs and fears.
The many changes, ill or good,
We cannot mention if we would.
Your early members, one and all,
Have signalled to the silent call;
A long procession, till today,
The Fathers! where, Oh! where are they?
They all have left both plain and hill.
Instead of sires the children till
This fruitful garden of the Lord
And scatter seed which is the word.
The Pastors' names we may not give;
Nine have passed on, and six still live.
The faithful Shepherd all doth hold,
Awake or sleeping, in one fold.
This tender slip, of palest hue,
By morning sun and evening dew,
Is now a plant with leaves and fruit;
Grand outcome of its soil and root.

Many their names, but one we'll call,
Who is of age and speaks for all
With tongue, and voice, and ready pen
And first was known as "little Ben."

Like Samuel, when but a child,
He heard the voice of God and smiled.
True to the end, the child reply
May he repeat, "Lord, Here am I."

The first one hundred years are done,
Another century is begun;
Veterans and youth! now lift your eyes,
A waiting harvest round you lies!

12. REMINISCENCES of the Choir.

DEA. CONVERSE COLE.

13. POEM.

MRS. SARAH CHENEY ABBOTT.

(Read by A. B. CHELLIS.)

We remember the boy who fingered the keys
When "our new pipe organ" first wafted the breeze,
Well laden with music so pure, and so sweet,
We thought with the angels our choir would compete.

The soul of the leader was fired by the sound
Which, with the full chorus, made these walls resound.
The whole congregation with spirit and tongue
Join in the New Song which the angels ne'er sung.

Then, here the young man made his graceful debut
On the faithful old organ, then shining and new.
And the organist lives though the years a full score,
And is bound to press onward and on evermore.

This thrifty young branch from the vine on our tire
Is reset at "The Hub" where now glows the "Cole-fire."
So that all who are warmed by its radiance feel
They have found the main spoke in the "much-water" wheel.

14. BENEDICTION, by REV. G. W. GARDNER, D. D.

THE EVENING EXERCISES

opened with an elaborate service of song, under the direction of the choir, led by Josiah Davis, Esq. An appropriate prayer was offered by Rev. F. A. Farren, pastor

of the church at New London, followed by an able address by the Rev. Dr. Gardner on "The supremacy of scripture in Baptist belief." The choir rendered the impressive anthem, "The Lord will comfort Zion."

Appropriate remarks were made by Reverends J. F. Fielden, Geo. C. Trow, Albert Heald, and O. C. Sargent. Miss Mabel E. Howard, of Kimball Union Academy, read letters from Reverends B. O. True, D. D., B. F. Lawrence, H. S. Hubbard, and W. Porter Bartlett.

The closing address was made by Rev. N. F. Tilden, and was a bristling, appropriate summary. This was followed by singing by the choir, "Nearer my God to Thee," and benediction by Rev. Dr. Gardner.







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